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Measuring Security and Governance for Sustainable Development Goals

Note from the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (France)

Summary

The measure of governance and, to a lesser extent, security is not one of the long-standing areas covered by French official statistics. However, France is already in a position to inform several of the indicators for SDG 16 "Peace, justice and effective institutions". Sometimes it is by mobilizing administrative sources, but most often through victimization surveys. In order to improve its coverage of the SDGs, French public statistics is changing its household survey system in 2018, in particular to measure the extent of discrimination and corruption. Some indicators remain however not covered for the moment, either for technical reasons, or because the international operational definitions are not yet fixed, or because official statistics hesitates to invest new fields, in particular that of the governance, not always easy to conceptually understand and measure robustly.

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I. Context

1. The 16th Sustainable Development Goal, "Peace, Justice and Effective Institutions", emphasizes the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all and the strengthening of institutions that are responsible and effective at all levels. The indicators it promotes, and that it asks public statisticians to provide, focus on the security of people and property in their societies (including within families), as well as on trust in institutions and in the efficiency and perceived honesty of the latter.

2. The measurement of violence (whether physical, sexual or psychological), of corruption, or of individuals' appreciation of the quality of institutions, are not part of the French statistical tradition, such as it was built and developed, mainly in the second half of the 20th century. Public statistics focused mainly on economic development, on employment and working conditions, and on the resources and living conditions of households, in a society where security was considered to pose few problems, hence, corruption was considered almost absent in a so-called "developed" country and where the legitimacy of democratic institutions in the aftermath of the Second World War was the subject of a broad consensus. Under these conditions, the public statistician was essentially to measure the progress of the economy, the distribution of jobs and resources between social groups and their gradual access to the various goods and services produced by a growing society. The economic difficulties that have emerged in recent decades have heightened the needs on questions of unemployment, income inequality and economic and social precariousness, but without bringing security and good governance issues back to the forefront. However, in the early 2000s, in a context of growing awareness of concerns related to insecurity, which was further reinforced very recently following the wave of attacks, a national observatory of delinquency was created in 2003 and then, in 2014, a ministerial statistical service responsible for internal security matters and crime statistics.

3. Under these conditions, what can the public statistician provide to meet the challenges of the SDG16, and how can they organize themselves to meet these challenges in the coming years?

4. Some of the indicators have long been part of statistical production from the exploitation of administrative sources. This is the case for example with the number of victims of intentional homicide (16.1.1): there were 872 in 2015 in France. It is possible to provide breakdowns by gender and age according to the UN recommendation. It is also possible to estimate the number of conflict-related deaths (16.1.2), which is zero in France in 1995 because terrorist attacks are explicitly excluded. These data come from statistics compiled by the security forces (police and gendarmerie), through the analysis of their judicial procedures.

5. Similarly, the public statistics of the Ministry of Justice provide information on the proportion of the prison population that is in the process of being tried: 27.2% in 2015. This is also a long-standing statistical indicator collected by the UN in its database on crime and criminal justice[1].

6. Lastly, thanks to the Public Service Employment Information System built by aggregation of administrative files by the National Statistical Service, it is possible to fill in SDG 16.7.1 "Distribution of posts in public institutions by gender and age": In 2015, men held 37.2% of these positions and women 62.8, youth under 24 5.6% and people 50 and over 32.5%.

[1] See the UNODC web site: http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/crime-and-criminal-justice.html

7. These indicators, derived from administrative data, have the advantage of being inexpensive to produce. We can also build them every year. But they represent only 4 of the 20 statistical indicators of the domain. To go further, it is necessary to resort to surveys of the population, which are richer, but also more expensive to produce.

8. Thus, three indicators come from victimization surveys, which began to develop in France at the end of the 20th century, first at the initiative of researchers and then in response to the European demand for social indicators. Since 2007, in response to a growing social demand and political interest on the themes of insecurity and delinquency, the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), which is the French national statistics institute , has put in place a major annual survey of victimization, "Living environment and security"[2] which interviews face-to-face a representative sample of the population on the thefts and the assaults of which they were recently victims.

9. This survey shows the proportion of the population that experienced physical or sexual violence in the previous 12 months, which is 2.4% of those 18 to 75 years old. Note that this figure does not fully correspond to indicator 16.1.3, which also includes psychological abuse, for reasons that we will discuss later. On the other hand, it includes the violence suffered within the family, including within the couple, thanks to a specific collection protocol, which limits the possible embarrassment of the interviewee towards the investigator and avoids putting victims of violence in danger by their statements.

10. The same survey is an input to a central indicator of well-being, not about being victimized, but about feeling safe around home. The number of people who consider that there is no danger to walking alone in their area of residence, as a proportion of the total population amounts to 89.4% of 14 years and over in 2015 in France (indicator 16.1.4). Note that with these types of questions, where there is a consensus in the work on the measurement of insecurity, we leave the comfort of the usual "factual" measures in public statistics to enter the more unusual subjective questions.

11. Lastly, the "Living and safety environment" survey provides information on an indicator of trust in the effectiveness or usefulness of institutions, namely the "proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported this to the competent authorities or resorted to other officially recognized dispute settlement mechanisms ". In France, only 19% of people aged 15 and over who declared themselves victims, informed the security forces.

12. As it exists, the French survey of victimization thus makes it possible to answer some of the indicators of goal 16, but in total only 7 statistical indicators are currently produced at the national level by France in this field. They are gathered on a dedicated area of the INSEE website[3]. It should be noted that, as far as the figures from the victimization surveys are concerned, it is not possible to obtain a new indicator every year: This is because the victimization rates are, fortunately, quite low, and despite the large size of the annual survey (around 16,000 respondents), it is not possible to establish reliable indicators each year, and the information collected during several collections should be aggregated to establish the indicators. This illustrates the high cost of producing indicators in the area of victimization, an area in which there is no administrative data.

[2] For a presentation of the survey, please see:
https://www.insee.fr/fr/metadonnees/source/s1278#consulter, and for detailed results:
https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Interstats/L-enquete-Cadre-de-vie-et-securite-CVS/Rapport-d-enquete-cadre-de-vie-et-securite-2017

[3] https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2654964

13. In part to improve its responses to the SDGs, but also to respond to a growing national social demand, the leaders of the national victimization survey decided to develop the questionnaire in two directions from 2018: discriminatory behaviour and corruption.

14. Regarding discriminatory behaviour, indicator 16.b.1 reads as follows: "Proportion of the population who reported having personally experienced discrimination or harassment in the preceding 12 months for reasons prohibited by international law on human rights". It is therefore a rather broad conception of discriminatory behaviour, which goes beyond the strict discriminations understood as the illegal denial of a right.

15. So far, the investigation has been able to identify discriminatory grounds relating to race, origin, gender or sexual orientation, for example, only for persons who have declared themselves victims of violence, threats or insults. To go further, drawing inspiration from surveys already conducted on the subject of discrimination and after discussion with specialists in the field[4], the designers of the survey propose a new module on discrimination and offensive attitudes.

16. This new module of the questionnaire begins as follows:

"We are now going to talk about the behaviours that you may have experienced because of, for example, your skin colour, your religion, your sexual orientation, your age, or being a man or a woman. It could be:

- Violence, threats or insults;
- Discrimination, that is to say, adverse treatment such as refusal to grant you a job, housing, a loan or any other good or service. For example, a person with a name of foreign origin who does not receive a response when applying for a job or a black-skinned person who is told that an apartment is already rented when that is not true, or someone who is denied credit because they come from a poor neighborhood.
- It can also be offensive or hurtful attitudes or remarks, for example, statements like "Women do not understand mechanics" or "All blacks have a sense of rhythm" or embarrassing questions: "Which country do you come from?" or ""Is it true that you are gay / lesbian?", it can also be an attitude of rejection or avoidance, such as a refusal to shake hands, or to get in an elevator with you, or crossing to the other side of the road. These behaviors may occur at the workplace or school, at the entrance to a nightclub, at a police check or elsewhere.

17. Following the questions that allow people to report if they have been victims in the two years preceding the survey, for those who respond positively, there are some questions about the nature of the discriminatory behaviour, the cause of this behaviour as well as the unfolding and the circumstances of the facts.

18. The collection phase of this revised survey is underway: we hope for the first results by the end of this year. Because of its innovative nature, adjustments may be necessary before a satisfactory measure of the phenomenon can be achieved.

19. The second subject, entirely new to French public statistics, is that of corruption. Here again, we chose the tool of the national survey of victimization, to try to inform indicator 16.5.1: Proportion of people having had, at least once, dealings with a public official to whom they gave a bribe, or who asked for a bribe in the previous 12 months. After consulting specialists in the field, and observing foreign experiences, or those of

[4] In particular the surveys carried out by Insee "Trajectories and origins" of 2008 (https://www.insee.fr/fr/metadonnees/source/s1276) et "life histories" of 2003 https://www.insee.fr/fr/metadonnees/source/s1246#consulter)

specialized NGOs, we designed a specific module of the survey "Framework of Life and Security" which begins:

"Sometimes people are asked for bribes, or gifts, to get a service, a place in a nursery, social housing, an administrative document, an authorization, a permit, a medical appointment, etc. In the last few years, in the course of your personal and private business, or in the course of your work, has anyone asked for or expected from you the payment of a bribe or a gift to provide their products or services?"

20. As in the previous topic, the difficulty is to make the interviewee understand what we want to talk about. This is all the more important here because a large majority of respondents never knew this phenomenon, or at least never interpreted it as such. We avoided using the word "corruption" in the title or even in the text of the question, as it might be misunderstood or cause rejection or misunderstanding.

21. After this "filter" question, there follows a small series of questions aimed at identifying the administrative or economic domain concerned.

22. As with discriminatory behaviour, we will have to wait until the end of 2018 to find out whether our questioning has worked well, and perhaps to draw the first quantitative information that can be used.

23. However, we can have an idea from the results of the survey carried out, according to a very similar method, by our Italian colleagues of ISTAT in 2015-2016. According to this survey, the share of Italian households facing "requests for money, favours, gifts or other in exchange for services or facilitating transactions" during the last year is 1.2%. Measured over a period of 3 years, it rises to 2.7%, and rises to 7.9% over the course of life. The sectors most affected by these corrupt behaviours are job search, then justice, social services and health[5].

24. Despite these planned changes, certain sustainable development indicators for Goal 16 will still not be provided by France in the coming years, for various reasons. This situation is not abnormal or unique to France. Moreover, among the indicators for which French official statistics have no solution yet, several are still classified in "Tier III" and are still the subject of conceptual discussions, especially in the Praia Group on the measure of governance, and the majority are in "Tier II", meaning that the way in which information is collected is problematic for a large number of countries[6].

25. Sometimes, there is no internationally recognized operational definition yet. This is the case of psychological violence, mentioned in indicators 16.1.3 and 16.2.1[7]. Some surveys have measured, through questions about "typical situations", psychological violence within the couple (e.g. "Did your spouse demand to know with whom and where you were?" "Did he devalue what you were doing? "), or in labour relations (" ... have you had repeated and unjustified criticisms of your work, have you been belittled or humiliated ...", "in your work, have you been kept out of the way, prevented from communicating with others?")[8]. Measurements are therefore possible, and have been studied and interpreted, but

[5] See: https://www.istat.it/en/archive/204383

[6] The number of statistical indicators for SDG 16 is particularly high (23), reflecting the complexity of international discussions in this domain. A notable reference on this subject is: Jean-Pierre Cling, Mireille Razafindrakoto, François Roubaud, 2018. "SDG16 on Governance and its measurement: Africa in the Lead", Document de travail DIAL N°2018-02, 20 pages.

[7] Although these two indicators are classified in Tier II, it is explicitly stated in the metadata on https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/: "There is still no consensus at the international level on the precise definition of the concept of psychological violence and there is as yet no generally well-established methodology for measuring psychological violence."

[8] "Violence and gender relations: contexts and consequences of violence against women and men" survey, National Institute for Demographic Studies (INED), 2015, https://virage.site.ined.fr/fr/

in the absence of a uniform international framework, the construction of reliable and comparable indicators over time and between countries is currently impossible.

26. Most often, it is questions of statistical technique that impact on the correct information for the indicators. These problems are very varied according to the indicators.

27. The indicator of violence against children 13.2.1 "Proportion of children aged 1 to 17 who were subjected to corporal punishment or psychological assault by a caregiver in the previous month" raises a problem of collection technique: for legal reasons, it is difficult to interview a sample of children without the consent of their parents, especially on such a subject. The questioning of parents introduces, of course, an important response bias, since they are most often the perpetrators of its violence, and the administrative data will systematically underestimate the extent of the phenomenon. Only a retrospective survey of very young adults could make it possible to approach the target, similar to what is proposed in indicator 16.2.3 "Proportion of young women and men aged 18 to 29 who have been victims of violence before the age of 18".

28. The indicator of corporate corruption 16.5.2 "Proportion of companies that have had at least once to deal with a public official to whom they have paid a bribe or who has asked them for a bribe in the previous 12 months" also poses a problem of sampling frame for a possible investigation: who to investigate within the company? First, there is a risk that economic leaders may want to hide or minimize an event that may have been deemed necessary for the life of their business. Secondly, passive bribery may affect several people in the company, but the information does not reach the one who, most often, answers the statistical questionnaires for the company.

29. On the suggestion of specialists in economic crime, France is experimenting from 2018 on the following approach, as part of its household survey: not only are people asked if they have been asked for a bribe in the household, their private or family life, but they are also asked if they have been victims of this form of corruption in their professional lives. Thus, we will try to measure a practice relating to the life of companies through a household survey. Following the same logic, we also ask people about the situations where, as part of their work, they were offered a bribe, for example to obtain a contract or an order. We thus complete the testimonies of passive corruption with testimonies of active corruption.

30. In the absence of an exact answer to the question of the proportion of companies concerned, we will therefore have an indication of the proportion of active persons who have been exposed to corrupt practices, provided that the investigative mechanism has worked well.

31. We will pass quickly to subjects for which, at the moment, we do not see any technical solutions, whether through specific surveys, the use of administrative sources or through integration of sources: the quantification of illicit international financial resources flows, the traceability of firearms or the number of victims of human trafficking. In these three fields, we are far, at the national as well as international levels, from having reliable tools to allow comparable figures between countries and from which we could construct time series[9].

32. Before concluding, let us consider another type of indicator for the moment that is beyond the reach of French public statistics. These are the indicators of satisfaction with the institutions: "Proportion of the population whose last experience with public services has been satisfactory" (SDG 16.6.2) and "Proportion of the population that believes that decision-making is open and responsive" (SDG 16.7.2). These two indicators both seem, at first glance, to be technically simple to construct, based on a general population survey.

[9] Two of these indicators are still officially classified in "Tier III", and the third in "Tier II".

They pose even fewer problems of survey technique than questions, for example, about sexual violence, and do not necessarily require high sample sizes. Their common point is to ask citizens for a general opinion on public action, which is not in the tradition of French official statistics surveys.

33. For a long time subjective questions of opinion, have been considered unreliable, and have been banned from official statistics. Now, however, opinions on economic prospects are used as cyclical barometers, the users of certain public services are questioned on the quality of the reception or the treatment of their requests. Following the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report on the "measurement of economic performance and social progress" submitted in September 2009, several statistical operations have been enriched by measurement tools on the overall well-being of individuals or satisfaction associated with certain activities[10].

34. On the other hand, probably because they are in themselves politically sensitive public policy evaluation indicators, global issues of satisfaction, trust or effectiveness of institutions are almost never included in the questionnaires of public statistics, in France but also in most European NSIs.

35. Some private or public research or research institutions do not share this reluctance. The OECD, in particular, has extensively explored this area in its study "How's Life? 2017 Measuring Well-being"[11]. We learn in particular, from a perspective very close to SDG 16.7.2, that in France, only 10% of the population feels they have a say in what the government does, which is well below the OECD average (33%)[12]. However, the OECD in this report highlights the difficulty in measuring governance, because of its multidimensional nature, an absence for now of international consensus on the conceptual scope of statistics of governance but also of a methodology still insufficiently robust and tested. This is particularly the case with regard to measuring confidence in institutions, whereas the measure of trust between individuals, based on household surveys, appears to be more consensual and tested.

36. Eurostat experimented in 2013 with the addition of a module of questions on subjective well-being in the SILC survey. This module included 4 questions on trust: one on trust in others and 3 on confidence in institutions (on a scale from 0 to 10 indicate your satisfaction regarding: how much trust do you have in political institutions and political and public leaders, how much trust do you have in justice and how much trust do you have in the police). The results of this experimental modu'e did not convince the NSIs, especially for measuring confidence in institutions and more specifically confidence in the political system. Thus, trust in politicians appeared very dependent on the political cycle which is obviously not the same across countries, making it difficult to interpret the results. In the end, when it came to deciding whether to repeat these questions about confidence in the SILC module in 2018, the task force in charge of the design of the module preferred not to do so. An important point to be further developed on these topics, based on sound empirical analysis supported by field survey results, is the international comparability of the statistics produced as well as the comparability over time of measurements for the same country.

37. This reluctance of national authorities is not shared worldwide, as, for example, several African countries have entrusted their national statistical institutes with the responsibility of conducting surveys of their governance, the questionnaires for which were

[10] See notably the following works from Insee:
https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1373892?sommaire=1373905&q=satisfaction and
https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1280974

[11] http://www.oecd.org/statistics/how-s-life-23089679.htm

[12] This information was collected in the International Adult Use of Information Survey (PIAAC):
https://www.insee.fr/fr/metadonnees/source/s1257

designed by researchers from the Institute for Research for Development (IRD) and UMR DIAL (Development, Institutions and Globalization) of the University of Paris-Dauphine. These survey modules collect information on victimization, feelings of insecurity, but also testimonials about corruption, the quality of relations with the authorities and confidence in the authorities. The work so far has demonstrated not only technical feasibility but also relevance and ability to highlight the governance qualities of the countries concerned[13].

38. In addition to technical difficulties, it is also the strategic orientations of the French public statistics that lead to these indicators not being provided. In particular, public statisticians consider that a relevant and effective public policy evaluation can only be conducted in agreement, and in coordination, with those responsible for this policy. This requirement - which is not incompatible with the scientific independence and the transparency of the approach - does not prove to be incompatible with the conduct of the sectoral work, aiming to evaluate a specific policy or in a particular field of public action, but so far it has not allowed the establishment of a system of global assessment of institutions. This state of affairs may evolve in the coming years. In particular, the CNIS working group, a forum for consultation between producers and users of official statistics, tasked since the summer of 2017 with selecting the relevant indicators reflecting France's efforts to achieve the targets associated with the SDGs, will be able to issue recommendations to develop the current statistical system associated with Goal 16.

II. Conclusion

39. In conclusion, French public statistics are not entirely destitute in the new field of statistics on peace, justice and effective institutions, but it will have to enrich its tools, and possibly to evolve some of its strategic axes, to increase the production of indicators in this area. These limits are not unique to France, and the enrichment of French data will also depend on the ongoing multilateral discussions on the concepts and methods that remain to be defined for certain indicators.

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[13] Razafindrakoto, M. and Roubaud, F.(2018) "Responding to the SDG16 Measurement Challenge: The Governance, Peace and Security Survey Modules in Africa", Global Policy (2018) University of Durham and John Wiley & Sons, Ltd